

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

HEREWITH FULL TEXT WASHINGTON POST ITEM DECEMBER 12, 1973
HEADED "PALESTINIANS PUT OUT FEELERS ABOUT TALKS WITH
U.S."

BEIRUT, DEC. 12 -- PALESTINIAN GUERRILLA ARE EXPLORING
THE POSSIBILITY OF SECRET HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIAL CONTACTS WITH
THE UNITED STATES IN THE NEAR FUTURE, INFORMED SOURCES
REPORT.

AT LEAST ONE CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE PALESTINE LIBER-
ATION ORGANIZATION, THE GUERRILLAS' MAIN POLITICAL BODY,
HAS EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO "EXPLAIN" THE PALESTINIAN
VIEWPOINT TO AMERICAN OFFICIALS PRIVATELY BEFORE THE
PALESTINIANS TAKE PART IN THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE,
LOCAL SOURCES SAY.

THE GUERRILLAS HAVE LONG BEEN VIRULENT CRITICS OF THE
U.S. GOVERNMENT FOR SUPPORTING ISRAEL AND JORDAN'S KING
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HUSSEIN. THE UNITED STATES HAS SHUNNED OFFICIAL CONTACTS

WITH THE GUERRILLAS OR ANY PURELY PALESTINIAN POLITICAL BODY SINCE THE 1948 ARAB-ISRAELI WAR IN PALESTINE.

THE IDENTITY OF THE PALESTINIANS WHO HAVE PUT OUT FEELERS FOR AMERICAN CONTACT, AND THE FORM THIS PROBE IS TAKING, IS A CLOSELY GUARDED SECRET IN ARAB CIRCLES HERE.

BUT IT IS KNOWN THAT THEY COMMAND THE RESPECT OF CONSERVATIVE AND RADICAL PALESTINIANS ALIKE AND THAT THEY HAVE HINTED THAT GUERRILLA LEADER YASSER ARAFAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME INVOLVED IN THE CONTACTS.

BUT RESPONSIBLE SOURCES HERE DENY THAT THERE ARE ANY PLANS FOR ARAFAT TO MEET SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER DURING HIS VISITS THIS WEEKEND TO BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS.

(ARAFAT WAS REPORTED BY THE BEIRUT NEWSPAPER AL LIWA AS REFUSING TO MEET KISSINGER, SAYING: "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MEET WITH THOSE WHO ARE ARMING OUR ENEMY WITH ALL THE TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION WHICH ARE USED AGAINST OUR REVOLUTIONARIES, SOLDIERS AND PEOPLE.")

THE PALESTINAINS ARE EVIDENTLY EAGER TO GAIN INCREASED INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING FOR THE PEACE CONFERENCE, WHICH THEY ARE EXPECTED TO JOIN IF THERE IS PROGRESS BEYOND THE ISSUES OF THE TERRITORIES OF EGYPT, SYRIA AND JORDAN OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL IN THE 1967 WAR.

SALAH KHALEF, ONE OF ARAFAT'S TOP LIEUTENANTS AND A MEMBER OF A MORE RADICAL PALESTINIAN FACTION, HAS MET IN RECENT WEEKS WITH FRENCH AND BRITISH DIPLOMATS IN CAIRO TO DISCUSS THE PEACE CONFERENCE, ACCORDING TO WESTERN SOURCES IN THE EGYPTIAN CAPITAL.

THE SOVIET UNION IS REPORTED TO HAVE EMPHASIZED TO ARAFAT DURING HIS NOVEMBER TRIP TO MOSCOW THAT THE GUERRILLAS MUST ESTABLISH DIRECT CONTACT WITH WASHINGTON IF THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE ANYTHING AT GENEVA.

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ONE OF THE MAJOR POINTS THE PALESTINIANS WANT TO MAKE IN ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH U.S. OFFICIALS, IT IS BELIEVED, IS THAT THE GUERRILLA LEADERSHIP HAS HAD NO CONNECTION WITH ACTS OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM CARRIED OUT IN THE NAME OF THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS. THESE INCLUDED THE ASSASSINATION OF TWO AMERICAN DIPLOMATS BY PALESTINIAN GUNMEN IN KHARTOUM

LAST MARCH.

THE REPORTS OF POSSIBLE U.S.-PALESTINIAN CONTACTS EMERGED AT THE SAME TIME THAT KING HUSSEIN DELIVERED A RARE PUBLIC REBUKE TO THE UNITED STATES, WHICH SUPPLIES HIM WITH VITAL MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID.

BEIRUT'S FRENCH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER, L'ORIENT LE JOUR, REPORTED YESTERDAY THAT, WHEN THE KING WAS ASKED ABOUT HIS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, HE REPLIED: "IN A COLD ANGER," ACCORDING TO THE PAPER:

"WE DON'T TRUST ANYONE. WE ARE SATISFIED WITH THE ATTITUDE OF NO ONE AND OUR INITIATIVES ARE DICTATED BY THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE MOMENT. RELATIONS BETWEEN COUNTRIES ARE NEVER STABLE AND WE HAVE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DEMANDS OF EACH SITUATION."

WESTERN SOURCES WHO HAVE RECENTLY TALKED WITH HUSSEIN IN AMMAN SAY THAT JORDAN HAS ALREADY DECIDED TO ATTEND THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE, DESPITE HUSSEIN'S THREAT LAST MONTH TO BOYCOTT THE CONFERENCE WHEN THE ARAB SUMMIT RECOGNIZED THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION AS THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

EGYPT HAS PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN PERSUADING JORDAN TO ATTEND, THESE SOURCES REPORT, AND INTENSIVE CONTACTS BETWEEN AMMAN AND CAIRO ARE SAID TO HAVE PRODUCED A FACE-SAVING FORMULA FOR HUSSEIN.

IN HIS PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS RECENTLY THE KING HAS STRESSED HIS WEARINESS WITH THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND

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HIS READINESS TO ALLOW THE PALESTINIAN TO FORM AN INDEPENDENT STATE APART FROM HIS HASHEMITE KINGDOM, ACCORDING TO WESTERN SOURCES. BUT HE INSISTS THAT ANY ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK TERRITORY OF THE JORDAN RIVER AND FROM EAST JERUSALEM SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED UNDER JORDANIAN AUSPICES.

THIS SENTIMENT WAS ECHOED IN THE INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN L'ORIENT LE JOUR. THE KING SAID THAT JORDAN WOULD ORGANIZE A REFERENDUM IN WHICH "THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WILL HAVE THE LAST WORD" ON THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT THEY WANT.

THE KING REACTED SHARPLY TO IMPLIED CRITICISM OF JORDAN'S SMALL ROLE IN THE OCTOBER WAR, SAYING THAT

EGYPT AND SYRIA HAD KEPT HIM IN THE DARK ON THE BEGINNING
OF THE WAR.

HE CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD REFUSED TO ALLOW
PALESTINIAN GUERRILLAS TO ENTER JORDAN TO LAUNCH COMMANDO
RAIDS AGAINST ISRAEL AND THAT HE HAD EXPRESSED
"RESERVATIONS" ABOUT A "VAGUE" EGYPTIAN PLAN TO LAUNCH AN
IN-DEPT ATTACK AGAINST ISRAEL FROM SOUTH JORDAN. THE
PLAN WAS DROPPED, THE KING ADDED. END TEXT. RUSH

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